

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANNOUNCEMENT

UPPER NEW RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY

Issues of local interest include public open houses for the Upper New Wild and Scenic River Study

WHAT: Residents of Raleigh, Summers and Mercer Counties in West Virginia and Giles County in Virginia will have an opportunity to learn and share information about the New River at two open houses occurring December 3 and 4, 2003. The Upper New Wild and Scenic Rivers Study is a local project occurring along the New River from the Route 460 bridge at Glen Lyn, Virginia to Bluestone Lake, near Hinton, West Virginia.

The Upper New River Wild and Scenic River Study was authorized by the Congress to determine whether a 20-mile section of the New River straddling the Virginia/West Virginia border should be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The wild and scenic river study area is limited to public lands owned by the Army Corps of Engineers within the Bluestone Project Area. (In West Virginia these lands are currently managed by the State of West Virginia as part of the Bluestone Wildlife Management Area.) The National Park Service, Northeast Regional Office in Philadelphia is conducting the study.

The wild and scenic river study will assess the eligibility and suitability of the river for designation into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. At the conclusion of the study a report will be prepared for the U.S. Congress. The Congress will make the final decision regarding whether or not the river should be designated and, if so, how it will be managed.

These open houses will provide area residents an opportunity to learn more about the implications of designation, to share ideas about issues, and to express opinions about how the river and lands along the river should be managed. In

addition to the open houses, area residents will have opportunities to comment on the study report before it is finalized and forwarded to the Congress. A draft version of the study report is scheduled to be released for public review in mid-2004.

- WHEN & WHERE:** Two public open houses will be held to introduce the study and provide an opportunity for public input.
- Date: *December 3, 2003* from *4:00 to 8:00 pm* at the *Memorial Building auditorium* in *Hinton, WV*, located at corner of Park and James Streets
 - Date: *December 4, 2003* from *4:00 to 8:00 pm* at the *Glen Lyn Town Hall* in *Glen Lyn, VA*

Attachment: Questions and Answers about the Upper New River Wild and Scenic River Study